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Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

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Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women
Pre-sessional working group
Seventieth session
20–24 November 2017

Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

Report of the pre-sessional working group

1. It is the practice of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women to convene a pre-sessional working group for five days to prepare lists of issues and questions relating to the initial and periodic reports that will be considered by the Committee at one of its future sessions.

2. The Committee decided that the pre-sessional working group for the seventieth session of the Committee would meet from 20 to 24 November 2017, immediately after the sixty-eighth session, in order to ensure that sufficient time would be available to States parties to submit their written replies to the lists of issues and questions, as well as to ensure their timely translation.

3. The following experts were designated as members of the pre-sessional working group and attended the session:

Gladys Acosta Vargas
Nicole Ameline
Lia Nadaraia
Bandana Rana
Aicha Vall Verges

4. Ms. Verges replaced Theodora Nwankwo, who was unable to participate.

5. The pre-sessional working group elected Ms. Ameline as its Chair.

6. The pre-sessional working group prepared lists of issues and questions with regard to the reports of Australia, the Cook Islands, Cyprus, Mexico, New Zealand, the State of Palestine and Turkmenistan. In that regard, it was guided by Committee decision 49/IX, according to which the Committee decided to limit such lists to 20 questions. In practice and exceptionally, some lists contain a maximum of 25 paragraphs. In accordance with its decisions 58/II, 59/IV and 60/IX, the Committee,

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on a pilot basis, prepared a list of issues and questions prior to reporting under the optional simplified reporting procedure, namely a list of issues and questions prior to the submission of the eighth periodic report of Bulgaria. For this, it was guided by its decisions 59/IV and 64/II, according to which the Committee decided to limit such lists to 25 paragraphs and to 75 questions, respectively.

7. To assist in the preparation of the lists of issues and questions, the pre-sessional working group had at its disposal electronic versions of the reports of the States parties listed above, with the exception of Bulgaria, which had availed itself of the simplified reporting procedure, in addition to the core documents of those States parties, with the exception of the State of Palestine; the general recommendations adopted by the Committee; draft lists of issues and questions prepared by the secretariat; and other pertinent information, including concluding observations of the Committee and other treaty bodies, as relevant. In preparing the lists, the pre-sessional working group paid particular attention to the States parties' follow-up to the concluding observations of the Committee on their previous reports, except for the State of Palestine, which had submitted an initial report.

8. The pre-sessional working group benefited from written and oral information submitted by entities of the United Nations system, non-governmental organizations and, in some cases, national human rights institutions with regard to the States parties listed above.

9. The lists of issues and questions adopted by the pre-sessional working group were transmitted to the States parties concerned and are contained in the following documents:

(a) List of issues and questions in relation to the eighth periodic report of Australia (CEDAW/C/AUS/Q/8);

(b) List of issues and questions in relation to the combined second and third periodic reports of the Cook Islands (CEDAW/C/COK/Q/2-3);

(c) List of issues and questions in relation to the eighth periodic report of Cyprus (CEDAW/C/CYP/Q/8);

(d) List of issues and questions in relation to the ninth periodic report of Mexico (CEDAW/C/MEX/Q/9);

(e) List of issues and questions in relation to the eighth periodic report of New Zealand (CEDAW/C/NZL/Q/8);

(f) List of issues and questions in relation to the initial report of the State of Palestine (CEDAW/C/PSE/Q/1);

(g) List of issues and questions in relation to the fifth periodic report of Turkmenistan (CEDAW/C/TKM/Q/5).

10. The list of issues and questions prior to the submission of the eighth periodic report of Bulgaria (CEDAW/C/BGR/QPR/8) will be submitted to the Committee for approval at its sixty-ninth session (19 February–9 March 2018) before being transmitted to the State party.

11. In accordance with Committee decisions 22/IV, 25/II and 31/III, the lists of issues and questions focused on themes addressed by the Convention, as well as on the linkages between relevant themes and target 5.1 of the Sustainable Development Goals. Those themes include the constitutional and legislative framework; women and peace and security, where applicable; national machinery for the advancement of women; extraterritorial obligations under the Convention; stereotypes and harmful practices; gender-based violence against women and girls, including domestic violence; trafficking in women and exploitation of prostitution;

participation of women in decision-making; nationality; education and training; employment; health; economic and social life; rural women; the situation of disadvantaged groups of women, such as older women, women with disabilities, women in detention, indigenous women, women belonging to ethnic minorities, refugee women and migrant women, lesbian, bisexual and transgender women and intersex persons; disaster risk reduction and climate change; equality before the law; and marriage and family relations.